

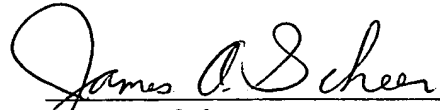
REMARKS

Reconsideration and further prosecution of the above-identified application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and the discussion that follows. Claims 6-29, 33-43, 46-55, 59-73, 75-80 and 83-93 are pending in this application, claims 16-26, 46-54, 70-72 and 75-80 have been withdrawn, and claims 1-5, 30-32, 44-45, 56-58, 74, 81-82 and 94 have been previously cancelled. Claims 6-15, 27, 33-43, 55, 59-69, 73 and 83-93 have been allowed and claims 28 and 29 have been amended herein. Claims 28 and 29 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2001/0038115 to Amanuma. After a careful review of the claims as amended, it is believed that all the pending claims are in allowable form and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 28 and 29 have been rejected as being anticipated by Amanuma. Independent claim 28 has been amended to claim the first plurality of vias are not connected to any routing level above the first routing level and below the third, and the second plurality of vias are not connected to any routing level above the second and below the third. Amanuma does not disclose this feature; rather, in Fig. 2, Amanuma discloses the second vias connected to a routing level 10 above the second routing level and below the third routing level. Therefore, the independent claim 28 is believed to distinguish over of the cited reference, as is claim 29 which is dependent upon allowable independent claim 28.

As discussed above, claims 28 and 29, as amended, are not anticipated by the cited reference, and the remaining pending claims have been allowed. Therefore, allowance of all remaining claims 6-15, 27-29, 33-43, 55, 59-69, 73 and 83-93 is believed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of the subject application, he is respectfully requested to telephone applicant's undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,


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